

history

This tour takes in an area of Faubourg Ste. Marie (now the Central Business District) composed of the back edge of the business district and the front edge of a residential and small commercial area populated by a variety of ethnic groups including African-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Italian-Americans, and Jewish-Americans. Geographically it was composed of Baronne St., the last totally “respectable” street in the business district; Dryades St., a small alley-like street of innumerable very small businesses; and S. Rampart St., a promenade for African-Americans and an indispensable business street for the inexpensive and hard-to-find in both musical instruments and haberdashery. It included a low end “sporting life” area alternately called “Back O’Town,” “Black Storyville,” and “The Battlefield,” as well as Parish Prison and New Orleans’ own amoeba-shaped Chinatown.

It was a diverse area then and still is today. It has remnants of its former times as well as new hotels, the City Hall/Civic Center Complex, and the burgeoning Medical District.



Elk Place Lodge No. 30.
Photo Provided Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection

In 1987 the United States Congress, through Concurrent Resolution 57, designated Jazz “a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support and resources to make certain it is preserved, understood and promulgated.”

This historic site tour is a program of the New Orleans Jazz Commission, a 17 member National Park Service public commission appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Commission was authorized on October 31, 1994 through Public Law 103-433 which established the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park - a new National Park focused on the early culture of traditional jazz.



The New Orleans Jazz Commission’s concurrent mission with New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park includes the evaluation of historic sites associated with the origins and early history of jazz, as well as preservation and interpretation of jazz history.

Further information on the historic jazz sites contained in this tour can be accessed at:



New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park.
916 N. Peters. 589-4841 www.nps.gov/ncor

Hogan Jazz Archives at Tulane University.
6801 Freret St. Jones Hall. 865-5688

Special Collections - Tulane University. Jones Hall. 6801 Freret St. 865-5685

New Orleans Jazz Museum Collection, LA State Museum.
The Mint. 400 Esplanade 568-8215

Historic New Orleans Collection. 533 Royal St. 523-4662 *Williams Research Center.* 598-7171

New Orleans Public Library - Louisiana Division.
219 Loyola. 596-2610

Preservation Resource Center.
923 Tchoupitoulas. 581-7032

Visit our website www.nojazzcommission.com

New Orleans Jazz history

WALKING TOURS

BUSINESS DISTRICT/BACK O’TOWN



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NUMBER THREE OF THE JAZZ HISTORY WALKING AND MOTOR TOUR SERIES

Sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz Commission

tour map

1. **TURNERS' HALL.** 932 Lafayette St. Turners' Hall dates from 1868 and was designed for the Society of Turners by architect William Thiel. This charitable, mostly German-American group supported an educational program and sponsored art, music, and dancing. The facility was later operated by Tulane University and dances were held in its large gymnasium.

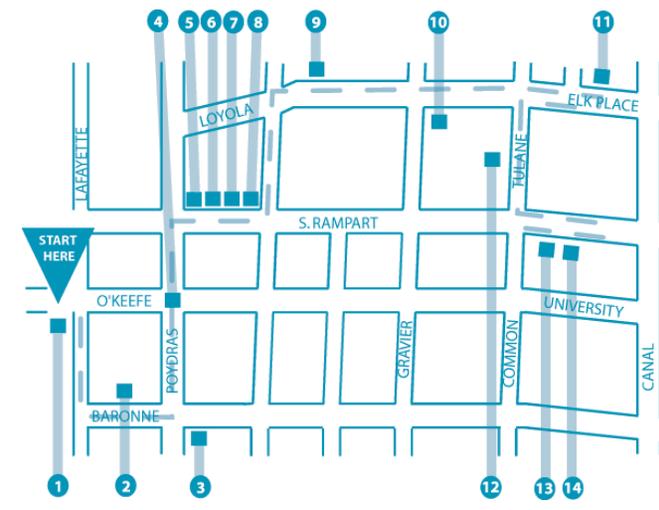
2. **CIVIC THEATER.** 533 Baronne St. This is New Orleans oldest theater and opened in 1906 as the Shubert Theater, one of a nationwide chain. Local theater architect, Sam Stone, designed it to meet specifications for legitimate theater. Through the years its name and its playbill have changed several times, offering movies and vaudeville as the Lafayette, burlesque as the Star, and legitimate theater and music as the Poche and the Civic.

3. **DESOTO HOTEL.** 420 Baronne St. This hotel opened in 1906 as the Denechaud Hotel, and then was known as the DeSoto for many years. It was designed by architects Toledano & Wogan with Rathbone DuBuys as associate. Louis Armstrong's mother worked here and brought home leftover food for the family. Nick LaRocca worked here as an electrician for Marks Construction Co. listening to many local bands as he worked. It was remodeled as Le Pavillon in 1971, by Seiferth and Gibert.

4. **POYDRAS MARKET.** 900-1000 Poydras St. The market occupied the neutral ground in these blocks. It was one of many city markets that held forth as a cultural center as well as a center of commerce, and also helped set the tone for this transitional neighborhood. Noted reed player Charlie Scaglioni hung out and played saxophone here.

5. **FRANK DOUROUX'S LITTLE GEM SALOON** (1904-09), **DAVID PAILET'S LOAN OFFICE** (1926-49), **PETE'S BLUE HEAVEN LOUNGE** (1950s). 449 S. Rampart St. This prominent corner housed three landmark businesses associated with jazz and was often both a starting and ending place for Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club funerals.

6. **KARNOFSKY STORE.** 427 S. Rampart St. The Karnofsky Store was the location for both the business and residence of the Jewish family that served as an alternate household for a young Louis Armstrong. He worked on their coal and junk wagons and ate meals with them on a regular basis. Morris Music, the city's first jazz record store, was initially run at this location by their son, and Louis' boyhood friend, Morris Karnofsky.



7. **IROQUOIS THEATER.** 413 S. Rampart St. The Iroquois Theater was built in the fall of 1911 and had vaudeville programs until 1920. It featured many noteworthy musicians including guitarist Lonnie Johnson and his pianist brother James "Steady Roll" Johnson; composer, pianist, and publisher Clarence Williams; singer Edna Landry, half-sister of Lizzie Miles; and Louis Armstrong. Louis won a talent contest here by dipping his face in flour and doing a "white face" routine.

8. **EAGLE SALOON.** 401 S. Rampart St. This building housed Jake Itzkovich's Eagle Loan Office until 1907. When he relocated, Frank Douroux opened his second tavern on the block in 1908 and named it after the loan office—thus the Eagle Saloon. It was a hangout for a group of musicians that named themselves after the saloon—the Eagle Band, which was Buddy Bolden's Band sans Bolden, who was at that time institutionalized. The third floor was the ballroom for the combined Odd Fellows/Masonic Lodge which had their lodge in an adjacent building at 1116 Perdido St. Buddy Bolden's, John Robichaux's, and Bunk Johnson's groups played for dances in the ballroom.

9. **BLACK STORYVILLE.** 200-300-400 Loyola Ave. The blocks now making-up the Civic Center were a tough back o'town neighborhood known alternately as Black Storyville or the Battlefield. It contained Louis Armstrong's second residence, Jelly Roll Morton's first residence, Funky Butt Hall, Matranga's Saloon and other significant jazz landmarks. It was demolished in the middle 1950's.

10. **PYTHIAN TEMPLE.** 234 Loyola Ave. The imposing Pythian Temple Building, now with a modern overlay, housed the local black Knights of Pythias, representing an economic achievement for people of color in the city. It was designed in 1908 by Diboll, Owen, & Goldstein Architects, with offices on the first floor and the Temple Theater on the second and third floors. It had a fashionable roof garden, the Pythian Roof, which was later enclosed to form the Parisian Garden Room. Cornetist Manuel Perez played regularly in this room and it was later managed by composer, bandleader, publisher A. J. Piron.

11. **ELKS LODGE.** 127 Elk Place. Lodge No. 30 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks opened their new grand headquarters in 1917. It was designed by Toledano, Wogan, & Bernard, architects, and had a large ballroom on the third and fourth floors. Many musical events took place here including an Armistice Celebration Dance in 1920 featuring a large Mexican Band that included some of the same musicians who played here years earlier for the Exposition in 1884.

12. **CHINATOWN.** 1120 Tulane Ave. Chinatown in New Orleans developed when Chinese laborers, imported for work on the upriver plantations after emancipation, found the work unsuitable and migrated to the city. It had irregular-shaped boundaries with a market in the 1100 blk. of Tulane Ave. Only two buildings remain. This building, which was across the street from the market, has a new white facade applied over its original structure.

13. **MORRIS MUSIC.** 164 S. Rampart St. Morris Music's last and longest location was in this fine building at the corner of S. Rampart and Common Sts. It was a meeting place for musicians, and Louis Armstrong visited his boyhood friend Morris Karnofsky and all his musician buddies here on his many return trips to the city.

14. **CHINESE LAUNDRY AND RESTAURANT.** 160 S. Rampart St. This two-story commercial building alternately housed a Chinese laundry and a Chinese restaurant. Many jazz musicians including, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, and Wingy Manone mentioned Chinatown. It supplied tom-toms, cymbals, gongs, as well as opium and other drugs for Storyville.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE GOOD JUDGEMENT AND COMMON SENSE IN TAKING THIS TOUR AS IT IS IN AN URBAN AREA.